THE ARGUMENT OF THE LETTER CONCERNING TOLERATION,

Briefly Conſider'd and Anſwer'd.

By Jonas Proast M.A. & Chaplain of All Souls College Oxon.

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Imprimatur,

JONATHAN EDWARDS

Vice-Can. Oxon.

April. 9. 1690.

To my very Worthy Friend
Mr.———

Sir,

SEeing you would not be deny'd; I have, in compliance with your Requeſt, conſider'd the Letter concerning Toleration: *but ſo, as to confine my ſelf to what reſpects the proper Subject and Deſign of it: not medling with any incidental matters, though ſome of that kind are liable enough to Animadverſion. You know I love no long work. And as ſhort as this is, it had been ſhorter, if I could well have made it ſo. I ſhould beg your pardon for the backwardneſs I ſhew'd to comply with your Requeſt, but that I fear the meanneſs of the performance will too much juſtifie it.*

March 27. 1690.

Sir, I am

Your much obliged, and

moſt faithful Servant.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Edition of the *Letter concerning Toleration*, here cited, is that in *Quarto*.

THE ARGUMENT OF THE LETTER CONCERNING TOLERATION,

Briefly consider'd and Answer'd.

IN the beginning of this *Letter*, the Author speaks of the *Mutual Toleration of* Christians *in their different Professions of Religion.* But toward the end of it he saith, *If we may openly speak the Truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither* Pagan, *nor* Mahumetan, *nor* Jew *ought to be excluded from the Civil Rights of the Commonwealth, because of his Religion.* And all that he requires of any, to qualify them for the benefit of the Toleration he endeavours to promote, is onely, That they be not *Atheists*; That they hold no *Opinions contrary to Civil*

Pag. 1.

Pag. 54.

Pag. 48.

Pag. 45.

Society; and, That they *own and teach the*
Pag. 47. *Duty of tolerating all men in matters of meer Religion.*

So that the Design of the Author is evidently, to shew, That all the Religions and Sects in the World, that are but consistent with Civil Society, and ready to tolerate each other, ought every where to be equally tolerated and protected, or to enjoy an *Equal and Impartial Liberty*, as the *Preface* calls it.

I do not believe this Author intends any prejudice, either to Religion in general, or to the Christian Religion. But yet it seems hard to conceive how he should think to do any Service to either, by recommending and perswading such a Toleration as he here proposeth. For how much soever it may tend to the Advancement of Trade and Commerce (which some seem to place above all other Considerations;) I see no reason, from any Experiment that has been made, to expect that True Religion would be any way a gainer by it; that it would be either the better preserved, or the more widely propagated, or rendered any whit the more fruitful in the Lives of its Professours by it. I am sure the Fruits of a Toleration not quite so large as our Author's,

(some

(ſome of which ſtill remain with us,) give no encouragement to hope for any ſuch Advantage from it.

But I do not deſign to *argue* againſt this Toleration, but only to enquire, What our Authour offers for the Proof of his Aſſertion, and to examine, Whether there be Strength enough in it, to bear the Weight he laies upon it. And this I hope may be done in a very little compaſs. For, if I underſtand this *Letter*, the whole Strength of what it urgeth for the Purpoſe of it, lies in this Argument:

There is but one Way of Salvation, or but one True Religion. Pag. 9, 23, 24.

No man can be ſaved by this Religion, who does not believe it to be the True Religion. Pag. 7, 8, 13, 26, 27.

This Belief is to be wrought in men by Reaſon and Argument, not by outward Force and Compulſion. Pag. 7, 8, 16, 17.

Therefore all ſuch Force is utterly of no uſe for the promoting True Religion, and the Salvation of Souls. Pag. 8, 27.

And therefore no body can have any Right to uſe any Force or Compulſion, for the bringing men to the True Religion: neither Pag. 18. Pag. 14, 18. Pag. 18.

Pag. 13, 18. Pag. 8, 18, 28. *any Private Perſon; nor any Eccleſiaſtical Officer (Biſhop, Prieſt, or other;) nor any Church, or Religious Society; nor the Civil Magiſtrate.*

This, upon a careful peruſal of this *Letter*, I take to be the ſingle Argument by which the Author endeavours in it to eſtabliſh his Poſition. And if every Point of this were ſufficiently proved, I muſt confeſs I think he would need no more for the accompliſhing his Deſign. But whether he has ſufficiently made out this Argument in all the Parts of it, is that which I am now to examine.

As to the *two firſt Propoſitions*, I have no Difference with our Authour, but do fully agree with him in them.

And for the *Third*, I readily grant that Reaſon and Arguments are the only proper Means, whereby to induce the Mind to aſſent to any Truth, which is not evident by its own Light: and that Force is very improper to be uſed to that end *inſtead* of Reaſon and Arguments. For who knows not, That *the nature of the Underſtanding is ſuch, that it cannot be Compelled to the Belief of any thing by outward Force?* Letter Pag. 7.

But

But notwithſtanding this, if Force be uſed, not in ſtead of Reaſon and Arguments, *i. e.* not to convince by its own proper Efficacy (which it cannot do,) but onely to bring men to conſider thoſe Reaſons and Arguments which are proper and ſufficient to convince them, but which, without being forced, they would not conſider: who can deny, but that *indirectly* and *at a diſtance*, it does ſome ſervice toward the bringing men to embrace that Truth, which otherwiſe, either through Careleſneſs and Negligence they would never acquaint themſelves with, or through Prejudice they would reject and condemn unheard, under the notion of Errour?

And by this we ſee how little of Truth there is in the *Fourth Propoſition*, which is this, That *all outward Force is utterly uſeleſs for the promoting True Religion and the Salvation of Souls.* For if Force ſo applied as is above mentioned, may, in ſuch ſort as has been ſaid, be ſerviceable to the bringing men to receive and embrace Truth; there can be no reaſon aſſigned, why this ſhould not hold with reſpect to the Truths of Religion, as well as with reſpect to any other Truths whatſoever. For as the True Religion, embrac'd upon

on ſuch Conſideration as Force drives a man to, is not the leſs *True*, for being ſo embraced; ſo neither does it upon that account loſe its *Acceptableneſs with God*, any more then that Obedience does, which God himſelf drives men to by chaſtening and afflicting them.

All therefore that is here requiſite to be conſidered for the clearing this matter, is, Whether there be any *need* of outward Force, for the bringing men to the True Religion, and ſo to Salvation. For as I acknowledge ſuch Force to be no fit means to be uſed for this end, (nor indeed for any other) where it is not *needful* or neceſſary; ſo if it ſhall appear to be ordinarily *needful* for this end, I ſuppoſe what has been already ſaid, may be thought ſufficient to ſhew the *uſefulneſs* of it in order to the ſame.

Now here I grant, that if all men were but ſo faithful to their own Souls, as to ſeek the way of Saving them, with ſuch Care and Diligence as the Importance of the matter deſerves, and with Minds free from Prejudice and Paſſion; there could be no need of Force to compell any man to do, what in that caſe every man would be ſure to do voluntarily, and of his own accord.

But

But then it must be granted withal, That if this were the case; as there is indeed but one true Religion, so there could be no other Religion but that in the world. Because (if we believe the Scriptures) no Man can fail of finding the way of Salvation, who seeks it as he ought; and in this case all Men are supposed so to seek it. And yet there is nothing more notorious, than that Men *have sought out many Inventions*, and contrived a great variety of of Religions to themselves: so that there is nothing about which the World is more divided, then it is about the way that leads to Eternal Blessedness. Which is an evident demonstration, that all Men have not sought the Truth in this matter, with that application of mind, and that freedom of Judgment, which was requisite to assure their finding it.

John 7. 17. Psal. 25. 9,12,14. Prov. 2. 1,.....5.

And as all the false Religions now on foot in the World, may reasonably be thought to have taken their rise from the slight and partial Consideration, which the Inventers of them contented themselves with in searching after the True; whilest they suffer'd their Lusts and Passions to sit in Judgement, and to manage the Enquiry: So it is obvious to observe, that notwithstanding that there are so many Religions

ligions in the World, and that only one of them can be true; yet there is nothing in which Men are more generally wanting to themſelves, than they are in the Conſideration which they ought to uſe in making their choice among them. 'Tis ſtrange indeed: but yet whoever looks abroad into the world muſt ſee, that in this affair, the Impreſſions of Education, the Reverence and Admiration of Perſons, Worldly reſpects, and the like incompetent Motives determine far greater numbers, than Reaſon, or ſuch Conſiderations as are apt and proper to manifeſt the Truth of things.

Nor is it leſs eaſie to obſerve, that whatever Religion men take up without Reaſon, they uſually adhere to it likewiſe without Reaſon. That which hinders a due Conſideration of things at firſt, and prevails with men to chooſe without Reaſon, has commonly the ſame power afterwards to keep them from conſidering, and to hold them to what they ſo chooſe, without Reaſon. Beſides, men have generally an overweening conceit of their own Judgements, and are prone to value what themſelves have choſen, even becauſe they thought fit to chooſe it: And this prejudices their minds againſt all

that

that can be ſaid to the diſparagement of their Choice, and poſſeſſes them with an opinion that nothing of that nature can deſerve their conſideration. To which I may add, that when once Men have eſpouſed a Religion, it is then become their *own*: and that alone (ſuch is the power of Self-love) is enough to endear it to them, and to make them grow fond of it: as Men are apt to dote upon their Children, becauſe they are *theirs*, even when they have little or nothing beſides to recommend them. And this alſo renders them averſe to the conſideration of any thing that may be offered againſt *their* Religion, or in behalf of any other.

But though it be ſo ordinary a thing for Men both to *chooſe* and to *perſiſt* in their Religion without Reaſon; yet it muſt be confeſs'd that thoſe who do ſo, are not willing to think they do ſo, nor that others ſhould think ſo of them. But then this onely puts them upon enquiring how their Leaders and the Champions of their Cauſe are wont to defend it, and to attack their Adverſaries: And ſo, ſtudying onely their own ſide of the Controverſy, they come to be the more confirm'd in the way they have choſen, and to think they can ſhew

 that

that they have Reaſon on their ſide. And when it is come to this; when ſuch an appearance of Reaſon ſtrikes in with their Affections and Prejudices, they are ſo much the further from thinking it poſſible that they may be in the wrong: And then they have no patience any longer to hear of deſcending to a ſevere and impartial examination of both ſides of the Queſtions in debate, but reject the motion with ſcorn, and grow angry with him that troubles them with it.

Now if this be the caſe, (as I think it cannot be denied to be; being matter of common obſervation;) If Men are generally ſo averſe to a due conſideration of things, where they are moſt concern'd to uſe it: If they uſually take up their Religion without examining it as they ought, and then grow ſo opinionative, and ſo ſtiff in their Prejudices, that neither the gentleſt Admonitions, nor the moſt earneſt Intreaties ſhall ever prevail with them afterwards to do it: What means is there left (beſides the Grace of God) to reduce thoſe of them that are got into a wrong Way, but to lay Thorns and Briars in it? that ſince they are deaf to all Perſwaſions, the uneaſineſs they meet with may at leaſt put them to a ſtand,

and

and encline them to lend an ear to thoſe who tell them they have miſtaken their way, and offer to ſhew them the right. When Men fly from the means of a right Information, and will not ſo much as conſider how reaſonable it is, throughly and impartially to examine a Religion, which they embraced upon ſuch Inducements as ought to have no ſway at all in the matter, and therefore with little or no examination of the proper Grounds of it: what humane method can be uſed, to bring them to act like Men, in an affair of ſuch conſequence, and to make a wiſer and more rational Choice, but that of laying ſuch Penalties upon them, as may balance the weight of thoſe Prejudices which enclined them to prefer a falſe Way before the True, and recover them to ſo much Sobriety and Reflexion, as ſeriouſly to put the queſtion to themſelves, Whether it be really worth the while to undergo ſuch Inconveniences, for adhering to a Religion, which, for any thing they know, may be falſe, or for rejecting another (if that be the caſe) which, for any thing they know, may be true, till they have brought it to the Bar of Reaſon, and given it a fair Tryal there. Where Inſtruction is ſtifly refuſed, and all Admonitions and Per-

ſwaſions prove vain and ineffectual, there is no room for any other Method but this: And then I am ſure there is *need* enough of it: and it is well if that will produce the deſired effect. But there is no reaſon to queſtion the ſucceſs of this Method (if it be rightly uſed) upon ſuch as are not altogether incurable: and thoſe that are ſo, muſt be left to God.

I ſay, *if it be rightly uſed; i. e.* if the Force applied, be duly *proportioned* to the Deſign of it. For, though upon the Conſiderations here offer'd, I take it to be clear in the general, that outward Force is neither *uſeleſs* nor *needleſs* for the bringing Men to do, what the ſaving of their Souls may require of them: yet I do not ſay, that all manner of Force, or all Degrees of it are fit to be uſed for this purpoſe. But then to determine preciſely the juſt Meaſures of it, and to ſay upon good grounds, Thus much may fitly and reaſonably be applied for the purpoſe we ſpeak of, and no more; This may perhaps require ſome conſideration. And to me, I confeſs, this ſeems to be the onely Point concerning which there is any ground for Controverſy, in this whole matter.

Now here I muſt profeſs my ſelf perfectly agreed with this Author, That *to proſecute men*

Let. p. 2. 3.

men with Fire and Sword, or *to deprive them of their Eſtates, to maim them with corporal Puniſhments, to ſtarve and torment them in noiſom Priſons, and in the end even to take away their lives, to make them Chriſtians,* is but an ill way of *expreſſing men's Deſire of the Salvation* of thoſe whom they treat in this manner: And that *it will be very difficult to* Pag. 21. *to perſwade men of Senſe, that he, who with dry Eyes, and ſatisfaction of mind, can deliver his Brother to the Executioner, to be burnt alive, does ſincerely and heartily concern himſelf to ſave that Brother from the Flames of Hell in the World to come.*

And (beſides the manifeſt Abſurdity of *takeing away men's lives to make them Chriſtians, &c.*) I cannot but remark, that theſe Methods are ſo very improper in reſpect to the Deſign of them, that they uſually produce the quite contrary effect. For whereas all the uſe which Force can have for the advancing true Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, is (as has already been ſhewed) by diſpoſing men to ſubmit to Inſtruction, and to give a fair Hearing to the Reaſons which are offer'd, for the enlightning their minds and diſcovering the Truth to them: Theſe Cruelties have the misfortune to be commonly

monly look't upon as ſo juſt a Prejudice againſt any Religion that uſes them, as makes it needleſs to look any further into it; and to tempt Men to reject it, as both falſe and deteſtable, without ever vouchſafing to conſider the Rational Grounds and Motives of it. This effect they ſeldom fail to work upon the *Sufferers* of them. And as to the *Spectatours*, if they be not beforehand well inſtructed in thoſe Grounds and Motives; they will be much tempted likewiſe, not onely to entertain the ſame opinion of ſuch a Religion, but withall to judge much more favourably of that of the Sufferers; who, they will be apt to think, would not expoſe themſelves to ſuch Extremities, which they might avoid by compliance, if they were not throughly ſatisfied of the Juſtice of their Cauſe.

Theſe Severities therefore I take to be utterly unapt and improper for the bringing men to embrace that Truth which muſt ſave them. But how far, within theſe bounds, that Force extends it ſelf, which is really ſerviceable to this end, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. It may ſuffice to ſay, That ſo much Force, or ſuch Penalties as are ordinarily ſufficient to prevail with men of common diſcretion, and not deſperately perverſe and obſtinate, to weigh matters

ters of Religion carefully and impartially; and without which ordinarily they will not do this; ſo much Force, or ſuch Penalties may fitly and reaſonably be uſed for the promoting true Religion in the World, and the Salvation of Souls.

If then this *Fourth Propoſition* be not true, (as perhaps by this time it appears it is not;) then the *Laſt Propoſition*, which is built upon it, muſt fall with it. Which *Laſt Propoſition* is this, That *no body can have any Right to uſe any outward Force or Compulſion, to bring men to the true Religion, and ſo to Salvation: neither any private Perſon; nor any Eccleſiaſtical Officer; nor any Church, or Religious Society; nor the civil Magiſtrate.*

And certainly, if there be ſo great *Uſe* and *Neceſſity* of outward Force (duly temper'd and applied) for the promoting True Religion and the Salvation of Souls, as I have endeavoured to ſhew there is; this is as good an Argument, to prove that there is ſomewhere a Right to uſe ſuch Force for that purpoſe, as the utter *Uſeleſſneſs* of Force (if that could be made out) would be, to prove that no body has any ſuch Right. For this is indeed the Point upon which this Controverſy turnes: If all Force and Compulſion be utterly uſeleſs and unſerviceble to the

the promoting theſe Ends; then to uſe it for that purpoſe, will be only to abuſe it; which no man can have a Right to do: But if, on the contrary, ſuch a degree of outward Force as has been mentioned, be really of great and even neceſſary Uſe for the advancing theſe Ends, (as, taking the World as we find it, I think it appears to be;) then it muſt be acknowledged, that there is a Right ſomewhere to uſe it for the advancing thoſe Ends; unleſs we will ſay (what without Impiety cannot be ſaid) that the Wiſe and Benign Diſpoſer and Governour of all things has not furniſh'd Mankind with competent Means for the promoting his own Honour in the World, and the Good of Souls.

And if there be ſuch a Right ſomewhere; Where ſhould it be, but where the Power of *Compelling* reſides? That is, principally, and in reference to the publick, in the Civil Sovereign (whom this Author calls the *Civil Magiſtrate*,) and in thoſe who derive Authority from him: But alſo, in a lower degree, in Parents, Maſters of Families, Tutors, *&c.* For I agree with this
Pag. 14. Authour, 1. That no *private Perſon* (if by *private Perſons* he means ſuch as have no Coactive Power over others) *has any Right, in any manner, to prejudice another Perſon in his Civil*

vil Employments, becauſe he is of another Church or Religion. For how ſhould he that has no Coactive Power, have any Right to uſe ſuch Power, either upon that, or upon any other account whatſoever? 2. That *no Eccleſiaſtical Officer*, as ſuch, nor yet, 3. Any *Church or Religious Society*, as ſuch, has any externally Coactive Power: and that therefore neither the one, nor the other, can, as ſuch, have any Right to uſe or exerciſe any ſuch Power, upon any pretence whatſoever. (Though I confeſs I do not yet underſtand why Eccleſiaſticks, or Clergy-men, are not as *capable* of ſuch Power, as other men.)

But in reference to the *Civil Magiſtrate*, our Author tells us, That *the Commonwealth ſeems to him be a Society of men conſtituted onely for the procuring, preſerving, and advancing of their own Civil Intereſts.* By which *Intereſts* he tells us he means *Life, Liberty, Health and Indolency of Body; and the Poſſeſſion of outward things, ſuch as Money, Lands, Houſes, Furniture, and the like.* And agreeably to this *Hypotheſis*, he would perſwade us, That *the whole Juriſdiction of the Magiſtrate reaches onely to theſe Civil Concernments: and that all Civil Power, Right, and Dominion, is bounded and* Pag. 6. Ibid. Ibid.

confined to the onely care of promoting these things: and that it neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the Salvation of Souls.

But in answer to this, 1. I acknowledge (as this Authour here seems to do) that the extent of the Magistrat's Jurisdiction is to be measured by the End for which the Commonwealth is instituted. For in vain are men conbined in such Societies as we call Commonwealths, if the Governours of them are not invested with sufficient Power to procure the End for which such Societies are intended. But then, 2. I must say, that our Authour does but beg the Question, when he affirms that the Commonwealth is constituted *onely* for the procuring, preserving, and advancing of the Civil Interests of the Members of it. That Commonwealths are instituted for these Ends, no man will deny. But if there be any other Ends besides these, attainable by Civil Society and Government; there is no reason to affirm that these are the *onely* Ends for which they are designed. Doubtless Commonwealths are instituted for the attaining of all the Benefits which Political Government can yield. And therefore if the *Spiritual* and *Eternal* Interests of men may any way be procured or advanced by Political Government; the procuring

curing and advancing thoſe Intereſts muſt in all reaſon be reckon'd among the Ends of Civil Societies, and ſo, conſequently, fall within the compaſs of the Magiſtrate's Juriſdiction.

But our Author offers *three Conſiderations*, which ſeem to him *abundantly to demonſtrate that the Civil Power neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the Salvation of Souls.* And the *Firſt* of them is, *Becauſe the Care of Souls is not committed to the Civil Magiſtrate, any more then to other men.* But this ſeems to be no *Conſideration* at all; but onely the proving the thing by it ſelf, in other words. For to *extend the Civil Power to the Salvation of Souls*, is nothing elſe but to ſay, *That the Care of Souls is committed to the Magiſtrate, more than to other men.* And therefore to ſay, That *the Civil Power neither can nor ought to be extended to the Salvation of Souls, becauſe the Care of Souls is not committed to the Magiſtrate, any more then to other men;* is in effect no more than to ſay, That *the Civil Power neither can nor ought to be extended to the Salvation of Souls, becauſe it neither can nor ought to be extended to the Salvation of Souls.* Pag. 7. Ibid.

But (to let this paſs) if what I ſaid but now, be true; it appears from thence, That beſides that

Care which Charity obliges all men, especially Christians, to take of each others souls; and besides that Care of Souls also which is committed to the proper Ministers of Religion, who by special designation are appointed, not onely to exhort, admonish, reprove, and correct by Spiritual Censures those, who having embraced the Truth, do find themselves obliged by it to submit to their Spiritual Authority; but likewise to *seek that which was lost*, and to endeavour by wholsom Instruction and due Information, to bring to the right Way those who never knew it, and to reduce such as have gone astray from it: I say, besides *that* Fraternal Care of Souls, which is common to all, and *this* Pastoral Care, which is purely Spiritual, and operates immediately upon the Consciences of men; there is an External and more remote Care of Souls, which is exercised, not only by obliging under temporal Sanctions both the Spiritual Pastours to perform their Duties, and those who own their Authority, to pay them Reverence and due Submission; but also by laying such Penalties upon those who refuse to embrace their Doctrine, and to submit to their Spiritual Government, as may make them *bethink* themselves, and put it out of the power of any foolish Humour,

Humour, or unreaſonable Prejudice, to alienate them from the Truth and their own Happineſs. Which Care of Souls, as it *can* only belong to the Civil Magiſtrate, ſo I think it appears from what has been ſaid, that it is indeed *committed to him.*

But our Author attempts to prove the contrary. *It is not*, ſaith he, *committed to him by God; because it appears not that God has ever given any ſuch Authority to one man over another, as to compel any one to his Religion.* But this is quite beſide the buſineſs. For the Authority of the Magiſtrate is not an Authority *to compel any one to his Religion*, but onely an Authority to procure all his Subjects the means of Diſcovering the Way of Salvation; and to procure withal, as much as in him lies, that none remain ignorant of it, or refuſe to embrace it, either for want of uſing thoſe means, or by reaſon of any ſuch Prejudices as may render them ineffectual. And certainly this Authority may be committed to the Magiſtrate *by God*, though he has given no man Authority *to compel another to his Religion.* Ibid.

Our Authour adds, *Nor can any ſuch Power be veſted in the Magiſtrate by the conſent of the People; becauſe no man can ſo far abandon his own Salvation, as blindly to leave it to the* Ibid.

choice

choice of any other, whether Prince or Subject, to preſcribe to him what Faith or Worſhip he ſhall embrace. To which I anſwer: As the Power of the Magiſtrate in reference to Religion, is ordained for the bringing men to *take ſuch care* as they ought of their Salvation, that they may not *blindly leave it to the choice,* neither *of any other* Perſon, nor yet of their own Luſts and Paſſions, *to preſcribe to them what Faith or Worſhip they ſhall embrace*: ſo if we *ſuppoſe* this power to be veſted in the Magiſtrate *by the conſent of the People;* this will not import their *abandoning the care of their Salvation,* but rather the contrary. For if men, in chooſing their Religion, are ſo generally ſubject, as has been ſhewed, when left wholly to themſelves, to be ſo much ſwayed by Prejudice and Paſſion, as either not at all, or not ſufficiently to regard the Reaſons and Motives which ought alone to determine their Choice: then it is every man's true Intereſt, not to be left wholly to himſelf in this matter, but that care ſhould be taken, that in an affair of ſo vaſt Concernment to him, he may be brought even againſt his own inclination, if it cannot be done otherwiſe (which is ordinarily the caſe) to act according to Reaſon and ſound Judgment. And then what

what better courſe can men take to provide for this, then by veſting the Power I have deſcribed, in him who bears the Sword? Not that I think the Sword is to be uſed in this buſineſs, (as I have ſufficiently declared already;) but becauſe all coactive Power reſolves at laſt into the Sword; ſince all (I do not ſay, that will not be *reformed in this matter* by leſſer Penalties, but) that refuſe to *ſubmit* to leſſer Penalties, muſt at laſt fall under the ſtroke of it.

In the *Second* place, ſaith our Authour, *The Care of ſouls cannot belong to the Civil Magiſtrate, becauſe his Power conſiſts onely in outward force; but true and ſaving Religion conſiſts in the inward Perſwaſion of the Mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And ſuch is the nature of the Underſtanding, that it cannot be compelled to the Belief of any thing by outward Force.* But *that* Care of Souls which I affirm to belong to the Magiſtrate, does therefore belong to him, *becauſe* his Power conſiſts in *outward Force*. For it conſiſts altogether in applying outward Force, in ſuch manner as has been ſaid, for the procuring the Salvation of Souls. And that outward Force may be ſo applyed as to procure the Salvation of Souls, notwithſtanding that *true and* *Ibid.*

ſaving

saving Religion consists in the inward Perswasion of the Mind, and that *the Understanding cannot be compelled to the Belief of any thing by outward Force*, appears, I hope, sufficiently from the foregoing discourse.

Pag. 8. The *Third Consideration* is this: *the care of the Salvation of Souls cannot belong to the Magistrate; because, though the rigour of Laws and the force of Penalties, were capable to convince and change Men's minds, yet would not that help at all to the Salvation of their Souls.* I believe no more then this Author does, that *the rigour of Laws*, and *the force of Penalties*, are *capable to convince and change Men's minds.* (Though I hope I have shewed that *moderate Penalties* may do good service toward the *procuring* the Conviction and change of Men's *minds.*) But if they *were* capable to work these effects; I confess I do not see why it should be be said, that *that would not help at all to the Salvation of their Souls.* But our Author's meaning appears by what followes: *For there being but one Truth, one way to Heaven; what*

Pag. 9. *hope is there that more men would be led into it, if they had no Rule but the Religion of the Court, and were put under a necessity to quit the Light of their own Reason, and oppose the*

Dictates

Dictates of their own Conſciences, and blindly to reſign up themſelves to the Will of their Governours, and to the Religion, which either Ignorance, Ambition, or Superſtition has chanced to eſtabliſh in the Countries where they were born? In the variety and contradiction of opinions in Religion, wherein the Princes of the World are as much divided as in their Secular Intereſts, the narrow way would be much ſtraitned; one Countrey alone would be in the right, and all the reſt of the World put under an obligation of following their Princes in the ways that lead to Deſtruction, and that which heightens the abſurdity, and very ill ſuits the Notion of a Deity, Men would owe their Eternal Happineſs or Miſery to the places of their Nativity.

Now all this I acknowledge to be very true. But to what purpoſe it is here alledged, I do not underſtand. For who requires that *Men ſhould have no Rule but the Religion of the Court?* or that they ſhould be *put under a neceſſity to quit the Light of their own Reaſon, and oppoſe the Dictates of their own Conſciences, and blindly reſign up themſelves to the Will of their Governers, &c.?* No man certainly, who thinks Religion worthy of his ſerious Thoughts. The

Power I aſcribe to the Magiſtrate, is given him, to bring men, not to his *own*, but to the *true* Religion: And though (as our Author
Pag. 34 puts us in mind) *the Religion of every Prince is Orthodox to himſelf*; yet if this Power keep within its bounds, it *can* ſerve the Intereſt of no other Religion but the true, among ſuch as have any concern for their Eternal Salvation; (and thoſe that have none, deſerve not to be conſider'd:) Becauſe the Penalties it enables him that has it to inflict, are not ſuch as may tempt ſuch Perſons either to renounce a Religion which they believe to be true, or to profeſs one which they do not believe to be ſo; but only ſuch as are apt to put them upon a ſerious and impartial examination of the Controverſy between the Magiſtrate and them: which is the way for them to come to the knowledge of the Truth. And if, upon ſuch examination of the matter, they chance to find that the Truth does not lie on the Magiſtrate's ſide; they have gained thus much however, even by the Magiſtrate's miſapplying his Power, that they know better than they did before, where the Truth does lie: And all the hurt that comes to them by it, is onely the ſuffering ſome tolerable Inconveniences for their following *the Light of their own Reaſon, and*

and the Dictates of their own Conſciences: which certainly is no ſuch Miſchief to Mankind, as to make it more eligible that there ſhould be no ſuch Power veſted in the Magiſtrate, but *the Care of every man's Soul ſhould be left to him-ſelf alone*, (as this Authour demands it ſhould be:) That is, that every man ſhould be ſuffered, quietly, and without the leaſt moleſtation, either to take no care at all of his Soul, if he be ſo pleaſed; or in doing it, to follow his own groundleſs Prejudices, or unaccountable Humour, or any crafty Seducer whom he may think fit to take for his Guid. Pag. 21, 41.

By what has been ſaid to theſe *Conſiderations*, I hope it ſufficiently appears, that as they afford us no new Argument, ſo they are far enough from *demonſtrating* what they are brought to prove.

Thus I have, as briefly as I could, examined the Argument which this Author makes uſe of, to prove what he ſo much deſires to make the World believe: not omitting any thing of his *Letter*, wherein he ſeems to place any part of his Strength. And I hope by this time an ordinary Reader may diſcern, that whereas his Deſign obliged him to ſhew, That all manner of outward Force is utterly uſeleſs to the purpoſe of bring-

ing

ing men to seek the Truth with that Care and Diligence, and that freedom of Judgement which they ought to use, that so they may find and embrace it, and attain Salvation by it: which would have been a good Foundation for his Conclusion: instead of attempting *that*, he has contented himself with making a good Declamation upon the Impossibility of doing that by outward Force, which can onely be done by Reason and Argument; and upon the Inhumanity, as well as Absurdity, of using *Fire* and *Sword* and Capi-
Pag. 16. tal Punishments, *to convince mens minds of Errour, and inform them of the Truth.* Which was much more easie to be done, and might serve as well among weak and unwary people, though it was not really to his purpose.

F I N I S.